



# DESTINATION BLOOMINGTON

## BUREAU CONTRIBUTES TO A THRIVING COMMUNITY

By Mayor Gene Winstead

SITUATED ON THE MINNESOTA RIVER IN the heart of the metropolitan area, our city boasts thousands of acres of parks, trees and open space. As spring settles in, Bloomington will surely live up to its name that means "flowering field."

But to visitors Bloomington also goes by another name, "The City of Hospitality." Its central location and proximity to the International Airport make Bloomington a destination leader for meetings, tourists and conventions. The Bloomington Convention and Visitors Bureau (BCVB) works to keep our city on the map.

Hospitality is Bloomington's number one industry. More than 20,000 people are employed in hotels, restaurants and the Mall of America. The BCVB helps this industry thrive by promoting Bloomington, its hotels, businesses and attractions to visitors from around the world.

President and CEO Bonnie Carlson, who has been with the BCVB for 19 years, started encouraging tourism when Bloomington began building hotels. Then, one person was distributing brochures. Today with a staff of 18, the BCVB is the second largest visitors and convention bureau in Minnesota and is recognized nationally and internationally.

"The BCVB works hard to bring in business and we have a great success ratio," Carlson said. "In 2003, 70 percent of the 1,005 groups who indicated that they were interested in coming to Bloomington brought their meetings here."

Marketing Bloomington requires a lot of advertising and the BCVB has had

tremendous success with the Internet. On their Web site, [www.bloomingtonmn.org](http://www.bloomingtonmn.org), you can book a hotel and find out more about attractions in and around Bloomington. In 2003, approximately one-half million users viewed Bloomington through the site and 40,000 registered users regularly ask for information regarding our city. The site includes:

- Online hotel reservations and packages with prices, services and amenities.
- Area maps.
- Attractions and activities.
- Dining and nightlife.
- Calendar of Twin Cities area events.

"When people are looking to travel or for a place to hold a meeting, they often turn to the Internet," Carlson said. "In 2003, the BCVB's Web site traffic increased 136 percent."

Carlson said the BCVB is a success because it is self-supporting.

"Visitors pay a lodging tax," Carlson said. "The BCVB receives a portion from that, of which 70 percent goes back into promoting Bloomington."

Visitors benefit Bloomington. They spend money that circulates into the local and state economy, helping many businesses. The lodging tax is a great economic benefit to the City. Tax revenue supports almost 10 percent, or \$4.2 million, of the City's General Fund Budget. A portion of the lodging tax is also used to help pay back bonds that the City issued for infrastructure improvements around the Mall of America.

For more information, call Bloomington Convention and Visitors Bureau at 952-858-8500 or visit [www.bloomingtonmn.org](http://www.bloomingtonmn.org).

## SALUTING EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE

The Bloomington Convention and Visitors Bureau recognizes that quality service from the hospitality industry brings people back to Bloomington. Eight years ago, the Diamond Service Awards was introduced to recognize outstanding service in hotel, restaurant and retail businesses. Housekeeping,



Bonnie Carlson with the Grand Marshal Snoopy at this year's Diamond Service Awards.

front desk personnel, wait staff, dishwashers, retail staff and others are nominated by their managers. In 2002, the City of Bloomington and the Advisory Board of Health joined with the Diamond Service Awards to sponsor a Food Safety Award. Considered the hospitality industry's "Academy Awards," a total of 290 nominations were submitted for this year's event.

## UNIQUE ATTRACTIONS

SOME OF BLOOMINGTON'S UNIQUE ATTRACTIONS RADIATE FROM THE Airport South District where many of our city's hotels, restaurants and retail business are located.

### MALL OF AMERICA

The nation's largest entertainment and retail complex welcomes more than 42 million guests each year and is the nation's number one visited attraction.

### IKEA

Mall of America's Phase II begins with this 330,000 square foot home furnishings store that is scheduled to open in summer 2004.

### CAMP SNOOPY

The largest indoor theme entertainment park in America includes 25 rides and attractions, six shops, three stages nine places to eat, and, of course, characters from the *Peanuts* comic strip.



## UNDERWATER ADVENTURES

The world's largest underground aquarium features sharks, stingrays and giant sea turtles.

## MINNESOTA VALLEY WILDLIFE REFUGE

This 12 square mile natural wonder is one of only four urban wildlife refuges in the nation.

visit [www.bloomingtonmn.org](http://www.bloomingtonmn.org)

Volume 12, Number 2

The *Briefing*, published bimonthly by the City of Bloomington, is mailed directly to our residents and businesses. Direct comments to Communications Administrator Diann Kirby, City of Bloomington, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington MN 55431-3027; PH 952-563-8818; TTY 952-563-8740; FAX 952-563-8715; E-MAIL [dkirby@ci.bloomington.mn.us](mailto:dkirby@ci.bloomington.mn.us). If you require Braille, larger print or computer disk, contact Diann Kirby.

Visit our Web site at [www.ci.bloomington.mn.us](http://www.ci.bloomington.mn.us)

## BLOOMINGTON CITY COUNCIL



**Mayor**  
Gene Winstead  
952-888-1258(h)  
[gwinstead@ci.bloomington.mn.us](mailto:gwinstead@ci.bloomington.mn.us)

**Councilmember At Large**  
Dave Abrams  
952-833-0505(h)  
[dabrams@ci.bloomington.mn.us](mailto:dabrams@ci.bloomington.mn.us)



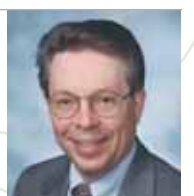
**Councilmember At Large**  
Amy Grady  
952-884-6502 (h)  
[agrady@ci.bloomington.mn.us](mailto:agrady@ci.bloomington.mn.us)

**Councilmember District I**  
Steve Peterson  
952-884-3262(h)  
[speterson@ci.bloomington.mn.us](mailto:speterson@ci.bloomington.mn.us)



**Councilmember District II**  
Heather Harden  
952-835-5919(h)  
[harden@ci.bloomington.mn.us](mailto:harden@ci.bloomington.mn.us)

**Councilmember District III**  
Steve Elkins  
612-578-2103(c)  
[selkins@ci.bloomington.mn.us](mailto:selkins@ci.bloomington.mn.us)



**Councilmember District IV**  
Vern Wilcox  
952-854-1425(h)  
[vwilcox@ci.bloomington.mn.us](mailto:vwilcox@ci.bloomington.mn.us)

Elected officials are presented by the City of Bloomington for informational purposes only.

**COUNCILMEMBERS**  
[council@ci.bloomington.mn.us](mailto:council@ci.bloomington.mn.us)

### CITY MANAGER

Mark Bernhardson 952-563-8780  
[citymanager@ci.bloomington.mn.us](mailto:citymanager@ci.bloomington.mn.us)

### DIRECTORS

Larry Lee, <i>Community Development</i>	952-563-8947
<a href="mailto:llee@ci.bloomington.mn.us">llee@ci.bloomington.mn.us</a>	
James Truax, <i>Community Services</i>	952-563-8717
<a href="mailto:communityservices@ci.bloomington.mn.us">communityservices@ci.bloomington.mn.us</a>	
Lori Economy-Scholler, <i>Finance</i>	952-563-8791
<a href="mailto:finance@ci.bloomington.mn.us">finance@ci.bloomington.mn.us</a>	
Ulie Seal, <i>Fire</i>	952-881-4062
<a href="mailto:fire@ci.bloomington.mn.us">fire@ci.bloomington.mn.us</a>	
Kent Michaelson, <i>Human Resources</i>	952-563-4898
<a href="mailto:kmichaelson@ci.bloomington.mn.us">kmichaelson@ci.bloomington.mn.us</a>	
David Ornstein, <i>Legal</i>	952-563-8753
<a href="mailto:legal@ci.bloomington.mn.us">legal@ci.bloomington.mn.us</a>	
John Laux, <i>Police</i>	952-563-8701
<a href="mailto:police@ci.bloomington.mn.us">police@ci.bloomington.mn.us</a>	
Charles Honchell, <i>Public Works</i>	952-563-8731
<a href="mailto:publicworks@ci.bloomington.mn.us">publicworks@ci.bloomington.mn.us</a>	

The City of Bloomington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status or status with regard to public assistance in employment or the provision of services. The City of Bloomington does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or activities. Upon request, accommodation will be provided to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in all City of Bloomington services, programs and activities. The City has designated coordinators to facilitate compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as required by Section 35.107 of the U.S. Department of Justice Regulations, and to coordinate compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as mandated by Section 8.53 of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Regulations. For information, contact the Human Services Division, City of Bloomington, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington MN 55431-3027; phone: 952-563-8700; TTY: 952-563-8740.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON BRIEFING, APRIL 2004